

United Engineering Company Shipyard,
Garage
(United Engineering Company Shipyard, Warehouse)
(Building No. 5)
2900 Main Street
Alameda
Alameda County
California

HAER No. CA-295-E

HAER
CAL
1-ALAM,
4E-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

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4E-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

UNITED ENGINEERING COMPANY SHIPYARD, GARAGE (United Engineering Company Shipyard, Warehouse) (Building No. 5)

HAER No. CA-295-E

Location: 2900 Main Street
Alameda
Alameda County
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U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Oakland West, Calif. quadrangle.
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10.562540.41842470

Significance: The garage is a contributing structure in the United Engineering Company Shipyard historic district that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The United Engineering Company Shipyard, established in 1941 to build and repair ships for the U.S. Navy, is the last surviving of several large World War II shipyards in Alameda. United Engineering built 21 tugboats and repaired hundreds of ships during the war. The facility was one of the largest employers in Alameda and played an important economic and social role in the city.

Description: This garage is located near the southeast corner of the large Inspection and Repair Shops building in the Alameda Gateway complex.

The garage is a small one-story rectangular-shaped building oriented east-west. It measures 32 feet 4 inches across the north and south façades and 20 feet 7 inches across the east and west facades. The structure has a total area of 663 square feet. Like most of the buildings constructed in the shipyards, the garage is utilitarian in appearance.

The garage rests on a foundation of wooden posts. The building is composed of a stud frame structural system composed of 3 by 6-inch boards. The exterior walls are covered primarily with board and batten wood siding. Part of the exterior wall is covered with plywood—apparently a later repair. The roof is gabled with a low pitch, has exposed rafter ends, and is covered with asphalt rolled strip roofing.

There are two symmetrical garage doors on the north side of the building. The doors are wood and hang on overhead tracks mounted on the exterior wall. The building is wired for electricity but has no other utilities.

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The interior of the building is a single space. The ceiling and walls are exposed trusswork and framing. The floor of the garage is asphalt. Conduits and light fixtures are located along the ceiling beam but no longer function.

The garage is in need of repair, but has been little altered.

Historical Context:

A building built on this site was shown on a plan of the shipyard in January 1942 (Edward K. Hussey), labeled "one-story frame storage shed". That structure, measuring 16' by 57', did not appear on subsequent plans of the site or lists of buildings in the shipyard up to February 1944. The first clear record of this building as it exists today, a much smaller building than the earlier building on the site, was on the 1948 Sanborn map where it was identified as a warehouse and labeled "G". The building was built by the United Engineering Company sometime between February 1944 and 1948. It seems likely that it was built in 1944 or 1945 before the war ended, when other construction was going on in the shipyard. Nothing else is known to have been built in the shipyard by United Engineering after the war, by which time existing facilities would have been adequate for a reduced workload. By the time the Todd Shipyards Corporation sold the property in 1984, the building was known as building no. 117.

Sources:

Alameda Gateway. *Existing Site Plan*. 30 January 1984.

Edward K. Hussey Engineering Corporation. *Survey No. 4050*, plan. Prepared for United Engineering Company Ltd. 24 January 1942.

Kennedy, Clyde C., Engineering Office of. "Area Plan and Interceptor Profile: Improvements to Sewer System for Properties Occupied by Todd Shipyards Corp., Alameda, Calif." Prepared for Matson - United Properties, Inc. 9 August 1951.

Sanborn Map Company. *Insurance Maps of Alameda, California*, p. 93. New York: 1948.

Thompson, Richard G., Lieutenant Colonel, San Francisco District, Corps of Engineers. Letter to Cherilyn Widell, State Historic Preservation Officer, requesting Determination of Eligibility. 30 April 1998.

United Engineering Company Ltd. Memo to Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks. "Reproduction Costs and Market Value to Third Parties of 'Civil Works'", with Estimated Schedule of "Civil Works" Facilities. 8 February 1946.

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United States. Army Corps of Engineers – San Francisco District and California. State Historic Preservation Officer. Memorandum of Agreement Regarding the Oakland Harbor Navigation Improvements Project, Alameda County, California. Signed 31 January 2001 and 22 January 2001.

Widell, Cheryl, State Historic Preservation Officer. Letter to Richard G. Thompson, Lieutenant Colonel, San Francisco District, Corps of Engineers, Regarding Oakland Harbor Ship Channel Deepening and Improvements, Alameda County [Determination of Eligibility Concurrence]. 9 June 1998.

Project Information: This report was prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Port of Oakland in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District and the California State Historic Preservation Officer concerning the former United Engineering Company shipyard. The Port of Oakland and the City of Alameda were concurring parties to the MOA. The MOA was created because of a proposal by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in partnership with the Port of Oakland to sponsor the Oakland Harbor Navigation Improvements Project. This project "would deepen Oakland Harbor channels and berth areas from -42 feet mean lower low water (MLLW) to -50 feet MLLW, with 2 feet overdredge allowance" and widen some portions of the channels. These actions, which would constitute an Undertaking under Section 106, would result in the demolition of several buildings and structures at the former United Engineering Company Shipyard. Because the shipyard had been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Undertaking would have an adverse effect on the property. Under the MOA, the following HAER documentation has been prepared: a written historic and descriptive report on the shipyard as a whole, seventeen separate reports on individual buildings and structures in the shipyard, including this report, and photographic documentation.

This building will not be demolished by the federal undertaking.

This report was prepared by Jody Stock, architectural designer, and Michael R. Corbett, architectural historian. Corbett was a subcontractor to Basin Research Associates of San Leandro. Basin Research was under contract to g. borchard & associates.